

SAN FRANCISCO

DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING

MODERNIZING DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO

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January 1955

M O D E R N I Z I N G

D O W N T O W N

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January 15, 1955

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Dear Mr. Williams:

It is with pleasure that I transmit to the City Planning Commission this staff report on "Modernizing Downtown San Francisco." It has been prepared for the purpose of assisting the business community to find ways and means of reorganizing, redesigning and rebuilding that major district of the city which we call "downtown."

All are aware of the vital part played by the central business district in the economy of the city and of the entire metropolitan area. There is increasing concern among business and civic leaders over the emerging challenge of decentralization to the traditional supremacy of downtown San Francisco. Some important steps have already been taken to meet the challenge. It is now widely accepted that a broad-scale approach based on the idea of a complete "modernization" of San Francisco's downtown is essential to increase its convenience and efficiency, to attract more customers and to assure the stability of the tremendous existing investment there.

The present report does not offer a detailed plan, but is intended rather to provide a preliminary analysis and to serve as a guide to the making of such a plan and of a program to carry it out. If it is found to be helpful in stimulating further initiative and action among our community's leaders, and in indicating ways in which the various departments of our city government can cooperate, it will have served its intended purpose.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Oppermann
Paul Oppermann
Director of Planning

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Although this report does not present complete or final solutions, it indicates a course of action on several phases of the downtown problem. The following recommendations are offered for consideration by appropriate executive and legislative bodies.

- (1) That the Department of City Planning, the Department of Public Works, the Utilities Engineering Bureau, and the Municipal Railway should review all rapid transit proposals and current Bay Area plans and submit joint recommendations for rapid transit within San Francisco.
- (2) That the Department of City Planning, the Department of Public Works, the Municipal Railway and the Police Traffic Bureau should review surface transit routes and one-way street proposals in the light of the street use suggestions made in this report.
- (3) That the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, the State Division of Highways, the State Division of Beaches and Parks, the Southern Pacific Company, the Western Pacific Railroad Company, the Santa Fe Railway Company, the Department of Public Works and the Department of City Planning, should jointly review the proposals for the Ferry Building and vicinity so that a definite plan and program can be developed for united action.
- (4) That the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Department of City Planning, and the Department of Public Works be directed to review the convention center needs and submit recommendations for a long-range solution.
- (5) That the Department of City Planning and the Redevelopment Agency should develop project plans for the early redevelopment and renewal of the present wholesale produce market area.
- (6) That the Parking Authority, the Department of City Planning, the Department of Public Works, and the Police Traffic Bureau should review the locations of proposed parking facilities in the light of recommendations that come from the first studies recommended above.
- (7) That the Department of Public Works, the Bureau of Light, Heat and Power, the Department of Electricity, the Municipal Railway, the Utilities Engineering Bureau, and the Department of City Planning should review the problem of street furniture and design control and submit recommendations for improvement.
- (8) That the Department of Public Works, the Department of City Planning, and the Art Commission should develop and recommend a plan for street tree planting, sidewalk widening, and the location of benches and monuments.
- (9) That the Downtown Association, Building Owners and Managers Association, Chamber of Commerce, Planning and Housing Association, and other business and property owner groups should develop a program of voluntary improvement of store-front advertising and consider regulating legislation if deemed necessary.

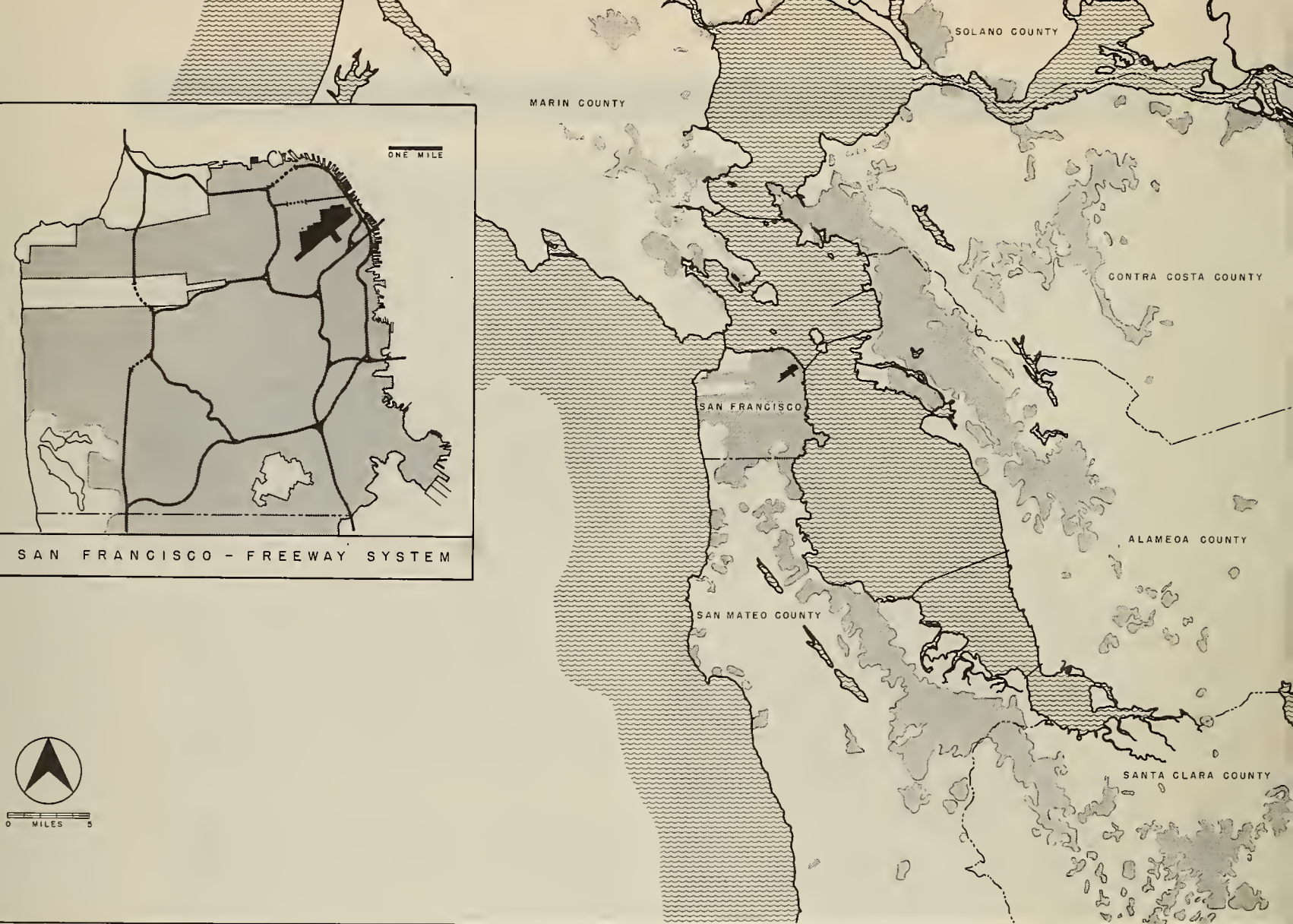
INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF DOWNTOWN

In terms of the amount of discussion and newsprint devoted to it, the downtown problem has reached the crisis stage in recent months. Alarm is expressed over the rise and spread of suburban shopping centers and the migration of department stores in a mountain-to-Mohammed movement to the customers. Alarm is expressed over the development of suburban professional zones and the movement to the country of administrative, insurance, editorial, and research offices once housed Downtown. Alarm is expressed over the scarcity of parking space available Downtown to compete with the space which attracts retail shoppers to the suburban shopping centers. These alarms are being sounded because Downtown San Francisco represents a capital investment important to every property owner and to every taxpayer in the city. Although it occupies only five percent of the land area of the City and County, it accounts for twenty-one percent of its taxable values. In a practical and in a symbolic sense, Downtown is San Francisco, and its fate is the fate of San Francisco.

Every attempt to solve particular phases of the Downtown problem has resulted in a conflict of interests and of emphasis. A suggested "solution" for automobile congestion, for example, is opposed because some property owners fear the limitations imposed by a one-way street. Parking "solutions" are opposed or supported largely on the basis of the amount of benefit a specific location will provide certain specific businesses. No progress will be made if the downtown problem is considered only in the light of some particular aspect such as parking or one-way streets or transit. The conflict of interests can only be overcome by an over-all approach to the problem that keeps each element in balance and related to each of the other elements -- transit, traffic, parking, pedestrian movement, and improved street appearance.

Such an over-all program for the modernization of Downtown is suggested in this report. It is based on an analysis of the functions of the area, its strong points and its shortcomings. It includes in its suggestions much that has already been proposed by different groups working for the improvement of the downtown area. It differs from these many important studies and recommendations in that it attempts to relate and balance each element in the problem in an over-all downtown plan.

The plan suggested in this report is not definitive in respect to each element in the solution -- in fact, alternatives are suggested. But the underlying principle of a co-ordinated approach to a problem that cannot be solved otherwise is given major emphasis. To the degree that this report demonstrates this point it will have served its primary purpose.



1. THE FUNCTION OF DOWNTOWN

There is no question that Downtown is the core.
As the core of the central city of the northern part of California, Downtown San Francisco performs a role in the economy of Northern California and the San Francisco Bay Area that in many respects is unique.

Downtown is the center for retail merchandising, finance and administration, and personal services whose trading area is the entire metropolitan area and northern part of the state. Most of the other major economic activities in San Francisco proper are closely allied to the Downtown area. These include wholesale activities, particularly sales branches and agents, insurance carriers, eating and drinking establishments, water transportation, including headquarters of steamship companies, and to some extent printing. Of the activities in which San Francisco has a greater percentage of payroll and employees than the remainder of the metropolitan area -- in wholesale activity, financing, transportation, and personal services -- each is a major Downtown activity. It is on these foundations that San Francisco's Downtown life primarily rests, even though its retail functions are of considerable importance. (See Tables I and II.)

The downtown area has maintained itself in the same position and at relatively the same size for over half a century. Approximately this same area has served San Francisco as its commercial center for one hundred years. Today from 250,000 to 300,000 persons come into the core during a normal business day, for such purposes as working, shopping, eating or transacting business. Including the peripheral areas adjoining the downtown core -- the Civic Center, the Nob Hill, Chinatown, and North Beach hotel and entertainment areas -- the total daytime population is raised to over 430,000 persons. The core area accounts for more than one-fourth of the total employment in San Francisco. With the peripheral areas included, over one-half of the employment in the city is located Downtown.

Although new regional shopping centers such as Stonestown may seem to be in competition with Downtown, they represent the normal expansion of commercial facilities that population growth inevitably brings to an area. (The West of Twin Peaks and Sunset Communities had a 64 percent increase in population between 1940 and 1950, for example, and San Mateo County, where other new shopping centers have been developed, had an over-all increase of 111 percent in the past decade.) But they also represent an improved way of accommodating and providing for an expanding population, and insofar as they outmode Downtown they may be in competition with Downtown. In terms of general attractiveness and compact arrangement, the best example of planned shopping centers can serve as a guide to modernization and renewal of Downtown. Attractiveness is, after all, everything the word implies: the ability to attract -- in this case, customers.

New office and professional zones such as Linfield Oaks in Menlo Park represent a recognition of the need for greater amenities in the working environment, which result directly in greater efficiency and reduced turnover of personnel. The comfort and welfare of people is provided for in such suburban working areas in terms of new building and space standards not now available Downtown.

Whatever advantages Downtown San Francisco may lay claim to, and these are mainly that it has a very large plant and offers a great variety of goods and services, it need not inevitably share in the enormous growth of the region around it. A glance at a map will indicate it is no longer central to the population it serves (the greater population now resides on the East side of the Bay), that it is neither a railway center nor the terminus of a great many highways. Thus the relative role of Downtown in the economy of the future Bay Area depends on the ability of the downtown area to capital-

ize upon its advantages and to overcome its deficiencies.

Downtown Activities

The major part of the downtown area of San Francisco is located on a relatively small number of blocks in a rectangular pattern. The only street that has tended to spread and disperse business facilities, with an attending bad effect of poor development for much of its length, is the Market Street diagonal. North of Market Street there are about 40 blocks which contain all the major business and facilities that attract people to the area. South of Market Street there are not more than ten blocks, all along Market Street, that can properly be considered part of the downtown core area.

To understand the functioning of the downtown area it is helpful to define its main sub-areas or centers within which one type of downtown activity predominates. In San Francisco, as in most other large cities, there is a fairly clear division in the downtown area between the localities for financial and administrative activities, retail selling, and hotel and entertainment facilities. The location of these primary core activities in Downtown San Francisco is shown on Map 2.

The financial and administrative functions concentrated in the San Francisco downtown area form what from many standpoints is the most important sub-center in the area. This is mainly due to the significance of finance, insurance, and business administration, not only in the Bay Area but in the western states, and to the fact that San Francisco is the major center for such activities.

Montgomery and Sansome Streets, both running north-south, are the two principal streets in the financial center. Crossing these, California, Pine and Bush Streets are the principal east-west streets from the point of view of the number of financial institutions located along them. The whole extent of the center along

Montgomery Street is from Market and Post Streets to Clay Street and on Sansome Street from Market and Sutter Street to Sacramento Street. New Montgomery Street, south of Market Street, is also a part of the financial and administrative center, and Market Street east of Kearny and Third Street has some administrative headquarters, such as the Pacific Gas and Electric Company offices, the Matson Navigation Company offices and the Southern Pacific Company offices.

San Francisco's downtown retail shopping center is the largest, most complete, and in many respects, the most conveniently arranged shopping center in the Bay Area. It is composed of three principal north-south streets -- Kearny, Grant Avenue and Stockton -- crossed by three principal east-west streets -- Sutter, Post and Geary -- and is cut diagonally north-east-southwest along its southern border by Market Street.

There are two parts to the downtown shopping center. One, lying north of Market Street, is an area devoted almost exclusively to luxury shopping, particularly in women's and men's clothing and accessories; the other along and close to Market Street, particularly on the south side, is a diverse assortment of stores in a generally medium price range. Of these two sections the north-of-Market part is by far the larger. The over-all character of the area is one of urban concentration and bustle. As is the case in outlying planned shopping centers, each department store tends to become a pivot around which other types of retail establishments congregate. These include large stores devoted to women's wear and accessories, men's wear, jewelry, and art goods in the luxury field. In addition the area provides office space for the many sales and service activities that are an essential part of the shopping center.

Entertainment is a regional function in San Francisco, and to the degree that San Francisco is a convention and tourist center, it is a function of national importance in the econ-

omy of the city. In this respect entertainment, including eating and drinking, takes precedence in economic importance over retail selling, and is only a degree below financial and administrative activities.

This report considers the downtown hotel and entertainment center as that part of the entertainment center located closest to the shopping center, stretching from Sutter Street on the north to Market Street on the south and out Market to the west as far as the Civic Center. Its eastern boundary is Powell Street, but its western boundary is not so easily defined, although Taylor Street marks the end of most of the intensive hotel and entertainment development. Mason and Powell are the most important north-south streets in this center, and Geary and Market are the dominant streets in the east-west direction.

Wholesale goods distribution, light manufacturing, and civic and cultural facilities, which make three more divisions of the metropolitan downtown area, are not much in evidence at the core. In any city these latter activities are almost invariably clustered around the most intense downtown concentration. They do affect the growth and development of the core area, however, and limit the ultimate size such an area can expect to attain. Although they bear a secondary relationship to the core activities, these peripheral activities are one of the essential elements in maintaining the downtown center.

Another secondary element which is related to the core concentration is the presence of downtown living or residential areas. In San Francisco the tradition of downtown living is as old as the city itself. There are concentrations of residential structures directly abutting the downtown area on the north and west which are not in that category of extremely blighted or slum areas that surround many American downtown centers, partly because they were built after the 1906 catastrophe. Such residential concentrations provide a local

supply of customers which helps sustain the downtown area. Some are devoted to high-income accommodations, and others contain a large number of single-person households or households of two unrelated persons -- roommates and apartment sharers. The proportion of such single-person households in San Francisco (18 percent) is much higher than that of the Bay Area as a whole (12 percent) or of the urban population of the United States as a whole (7 percent). This large proportion has boosted the number of entertainment, restaurant and hotel facilities in and around the downtown center and is another element important to the continued maintenance of the core.

Access to Downtown

Downtown San Francisco developed as the metropolitan center of the Bay Area during the era of public transit. Its competitive advantage of accessibility stems from earlier times when the great majority of the residents of other communities of the Bay Area who worked or shopped Downtown, as well as residents of the city proper, went Downtown by public transit. Yet today, despite the considerable change from the use of transit to daily and habitual use of personal automobiles, more people still arrive Downtown by public transit than in automobiles.

About one-fourth of the people working Downtown live outside the city. The majority of the commuters from the suburbs work in the financial center, and seven out of ten of them use public transit in their daily journey to work. On the other hand, suburban shoppers and others who come Downtown use automobiles in six out of ten cases, partly because of the slow, infrequent and inconvenient mid-day bus and train service.

Downtown is a mecca for more out-of-city residents as an employment center than as a shopping or business center. There are 25,000 commuters from the suburbs working in the financial center about 30 percent of the working force of that area. The 10,000 commuters who

and they constitute about

work in the shopping and hotel and entertainment centers constitute about 17.5 percent of the total working force in those areas. Of the more than 100,000 persons who daily go Downtown for shopping or other purposes, however, only one out of six come from outside the city proper.

There are today three principal carriers of interurban passengers serving Downtown: 1) the Key System Transit Lines serving the East, with trains and buses operating over the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge; 2) the Pacific Greyhound Lines serving Marin with buses operating over the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Peninsula with buses operating on the Bayshore Freeway, El Camino Real and the Coast Highway; and 3) the Southern Pacific Company serving the majority of Peninsula transit riders by steam train. None of these systems is very satisfactory either from the standpoint of the operators or of the passengers.

Before the Bay was bridged, the bulk of the interurban traffic -- from the East Bay and Marin -- was dependent upon ferry service to reach San Francisco. It was also dependent to a large extent upon public transit on land on the other side of the Bay. In Marin it was the Northwestern Pacific electric trains, and in the East Bay, the Key System, Southern Pacific, and Sacramento Northern electric trains. Terminal facilities at the Ferry Building were tied in with local Downtown transit to provide a fairly convenient service to the financial and shopping centers.

With the building of the bridges superiority of the transit systems was lost, and the new Downtown terminal facilities were less satisfactory. At an increasing rate the remaining systems, largely converted to buses, have been losing their patronage to the automobile. The only exception to the trend is the slight increase in patronage accruing to the Southern Pacific Railroad in its Peninsula commuter operations.

When the decision was made to locate the Bay Bridge Transit Terminal at First and Mission Streets, it was the contention of many groups that this location was a mistake. In 1934 the Downtown Association, in a report on a rapid transit system for the city and the region, stated: "With the completion of the two Bay Bridges, for San Francisco to dispose of the needs of this rapid transit patronage by merely dumping it at the separate terminals near the bridgeheads or out Third Street, would be to perpetuate the present worn out method -- plus a yearly mounting increment of confusion." Chief Administrative Officer Alfred J. Cleary in the same year spoke out thus: "San Francisco simply cannot be crippled by a one-stop plan that does not distribute commuters and shoppers within the business section. . . . The proposal for a one-stop dumping station is a serious threat to the city." Suggestions were made at that time by Eion J. Arnold, transportation engineer of Chicago, advocating that "The peninsula should have fast train service that will distribute passengers at more than one station near the San Francisco business district. Likewise, East Bay passengers over the bridge should have more than one San Francisco stop. The ideal system would be to route the electric trains from the east Bay across the bridge and down the peninsula under the through routing system." This was all written twenty years ago but the situation is unchanged today.

Local transit Downtown -- both that carrying passengers within the downtown area and that connecting Downtown with the residential community areas of the city -- has also changed and diminished in quality. The scattering of interurban terminals which occurred after the bridges were completed caused a dissipation of the basic local transit system downtown. And changeovers from street cars to buses, coupled with increasing automobile traffic, have created transit congestion problems greater than those of the recent four-track era when almost all street cars in the city trundled down Market Street to the Ferry Building.

Traffic problems in the Downtown streets are aggravated by two factors: the disjointed street pattern, with Market Street separating two unrelated street systems, and the limited number of streets leading over the barrier of hills to the north of the shopping center and west of the financial center. Streets feeding into Market from the south are generally wider than streets to the north of the diagonal and none of the former coincides exactly with any of the latter. Furthermore, Market Street serves as the major channel for all local public transit entering the downtown area via north-of-Market streets, and thus it carries more public transit than any other street in the city. The barrier of the hills has been met in part by tunnels (Stockton and Broadway), in part by one-way streets (Pine and Eush, Montgomery and Sansome), and in part by adjustments in transit routes. The problem created by the Market Street diagonal and the change in street pattern on either side of it, and the problem of topographic restriction, have challenged and will continue to engage and challenge a great deal of traffic engineering time and talent.

EMPLOYEES AND PAYROLLS IN SAN FRANCISCO AS
PERCENTAGE OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA, 1951

	Percentage of Payroll	Percentage of Employees
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	38%	33%
Mineral Extraction	26%	22%
Construction	41%	40%
Manufacturing	37%	37%
Transportation	58%	56%
Wholesale	73%	71%
Finance	73%	71%
Service	57%	56%
Not Classified	37%	36%
Retail	48%	46%

TABLE I

Source:

TEN LARGEST EMPLOYMENT GROUPS, BY AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, FOR THE YEAR 1951

San Francisco City and County	Alameda County	Santa Clara County	San Mateo County	Marin County
1. Sales Branches and Agents Wholesale Distributors	1. Food Manufacturing	1. Food Manufacturing	1. Transportation	1. Building Contractors
2. Full service, limited function Wholesalers	2. Machinery Manufacturing	2. Electric Machinery	2. Metal Industry	2. Service (other than personal and medical)
3. Insurance Carriers	3. General Retail	3. Building Trades	3. Building Trades	3. Manufacturing (all)
4. Eating and Drinking	4. Food and Liquor Retail	4. General Contracting	4. General Contracting	4. Retail Food and Liquor
5. Food Manufacturing	5. Building Trades	5. Eating and Drinking	5. Eating and Drinking	5. Eating and Drinking
6. Water Transportation	6. Transportation Equipment	6. Other Retail (Drugs, Furniture)	6. Food Manufacturing	6. Transportation and Public Utilities
7. Building Trades	7. Other Retail	7. Food and Liquor Retail	7. Retail Food and Liquor	7. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
8. General Retail	8. Eating and Drinking	8. Machinery Manufacturing	8. Electric Machinery	8. Building Trades
9. Other Retail	9. Wholesale Full service	9. General Retail	9. Other Retail	9. Other Retail
10. Printing	10. General Contracting	10. Wholesale Full service	10. General Contracting	10. Communications (Telephone and Telegraph)

Source: California Employment and Payrolls, 1951; State of California Department of Employment,
Report 127, No. 14, August 1953.

TABLE II

11. THE APPEARANCE OF DOWNTOWN

The Financial Center

The financial center of an American city almost invariably supplies that city with its most conspicuous landmark -- its skyline -- that cluster of important buildings that by their dominance in the city scene makes clear the role of finance in our economy and culture. Even in San Francisco where large hotels and apartment buildings perched on the tops of hills punctuate the skyline, the financial and administrative center, on low ground, dominates the city by sheer mass solidity, if not, as in other, flatter towns, by lofty preeminence.

It is the skyline produced by the group of buildings along Montgomery, Bush and Sansome Streets that, to many minds, identifies San Francisco as much as the bridges or Twin Peaks or Telegraph Hill. It is this cluster as viewed from the Bay Bridge, or from the new Bayshore Freeway, that symbolizes the role of the city in the Bay Area and in the Northern California region.

The financial center has the appearance of solidity, monumental and institutionalized, with little evidence of the kind of clutter that mars the more competitive retail center. Except for street congestion, the greatest defect of the financial center is its scarcity of open space. The left-over fragment of land at the intersection of Bush, Battery, and Market Streets, opposite First Street, has, however, been given one of the most successful treatments of a small public place to be seen in this city. Rather than setting the Mechanics' Monument on a small concrete cookie-form whose shape would have no meaning except from the air or in plan, two types of pavement have been used -- concrete and old stone blocks that once were used for paving streets. This, in itself, separates the pedestrian traffic rush from the less active space around the monument. Stone benches without ornament are white in contrast to the dark granite blocks, and acacia trees, set into

the cobbled area, provide greenery to contrast with all the stone, mortar, glass and steel towering around. The most important thing about this bit of landscape architecture in the heart of the business center is that it is intensively used. Other similar well designed open spaces are needed in the financial center, where sun and fresh air can provide a little contrast to the fluorescent lights and still air of the offices where more than 80,000 workers spend most of their day.



Two types of pavement have been used



Most important . . . it is used



DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO: EXISTING FUNCTIONAL AREAS

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| — FUNCTIONAL AREA BOUNDARIES | MAJOR OFFICE BUILDING |
| — TRANSIT LINES | MAJOR SHOPPING FACILITY |
| P MAJOR PARKING FACILITY | MAJOR HOTEL OR ENTERTAINMENT FACILITY |
| T MAJOR TERMINAL FACILITY | PUBLIC BUILDING |
| | CLUB OR PROFESSIONAL BUILDING |

The Retail Shopping Center

16 From the standpoint of appearance there is nothing that besets the downtown shopping area more than clutter. There are many kinds of clutter but all of them contribute to an unpleasant visual harassment that tends to obscure rather than to display the goods and facilities available along the streets. This clutter may be classified into general groups: 1) store-front clutter, which consists of awnings, marquees, overhanging signs, banners and window displays, competing with one another or in overabundance; 2) pavement clutter, consisting of man-hole covers, sidewalk elevators, contrasting sidewalk textures and treatment; and 3) street clutter, including light standards, hydrants, street signs and indicators, transit signs, transit poles, transit wires, police and fire boxes, parking meters, newspaper stands, litter baskets and curb railings.

17 As a rule, the more established a business, the less it is apt to insist on identifying itself over every square inch of its surface. Thus, Post Street, with a variety of businesses of relatively stable character, is also relatively uncluttered. Other streets illustrate store-front clutter with contrasting examples. Stockton Street between Market and O'Farrell Streets, for example, is uncluttered on one side where there are two large apparel stores, whereas the other side, where there is a variety of small enterprises, is particularly cluttered. Grant Avenue is a relatively clean, handsome street except on the west side between Geary and O'Farrell Streets where it has a rash of overhanging signs, banners and displays, which make it difficult to identify any business in this block. Shops on Sutter Street between Grant Avenue and Kearny Street advertise at a relative minimum, but between Grant Avenue and Stockton Street there is a blinding flurry of competitive advertising.



A rational solution to the problem

18 On Post Street opposite Union Square an attempt has been made to create a fairly rational solution to the problem of handling a group of dissimilar stores. This has been achieved by taking the elements of store-front advertising -- awnings, signs and marquees -- and supplying a similar form, relating colors, and keeping all signs flat to the building. Each may be seen, not to the disadvantage of any other, and the size, color and scale of the signs seem to have been carefully thought out.

19 No possible objection can be made to the use of advertising in the downtown area. What seems objectionable is that as generally used today, it fails of its own purpose, which is to inform people of the retail and entertainment facilities available along a street. When the proliferation of signs approaches a point, as it does along some streets, where very little can be distinguished other than a general clutter of signs, the initial purpose has failed.



Little can be distinguished other than clutter



The overhead mat . . . seems primitive

On the other hand, signs do contribute considerably to the liveliness of a downtown area, and it is a matter of imaginative treatment that distinguishes the good and effective from the bad and ineffective.

Changes in the texture of the pavement can often be a pleasing and useful technique in the development of pedestrian ways, but such a technique is rarely used in the Downtown shopping center. Over all there is only the macadam of the street surface and the concrete sidewalk, but clutter results nevertheless from the number of unrelated things let into the surface of one or the other: manhole covers, street elevators, grills and glass holes, street car tracks, and tar-covered cracks.

The clutter that municipal government contributes to the city streets is not the least disturbing of all the elements producing clutter in the downtown area. Overhead wires are a necessary part of the transit system when there are trolley bus lines and street car lines, but the heavy overhead mat that is sometimes produced at crossings and switching points seems technologically primitive. Poles to support this and other utilities sometimes produce sizable forests at corners with an undergrowth of pedestals for fire and police boxes, fire hydrants, mail boxes, and trash baskets. Such corners may also attract newspaper and magazine vending racks and a clutter of signs directing traffic and regulating traffic and regulating parking. Beside the electric device that tells motorists to stop or go is one that tells pedestrians to walk or wait, sometimes separately mounted and sometimes attached to one of the other of the available poles. On the other hand, signs do contribute considerably to the liveliness of a downtown area, and it is a matter of imaginative treatment that distinguishes the good and effective from the bad and ineffective.

Repeated:
omit

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As the elements of sign clutter can be rationalized by thoughtful and careful design into something that is composed, telling and pleasing to the eyes, so can these elements of street clutter be handled in an orderly way, with the even more important result that public safety and convenience will be better served. As it is, it is difficult to see the sign or signal or facility placed there to inform or to warn or to put letters in or trash in, because, with no attention paid to their total effect, they are all lost in a general muddle.



No attention to total effect

Fewer public signs, better designed, with more related information and a more careful grouping of the things that stand around has achieved a relief from clutter and confusion in other places.

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With the major exception of Union Square, planting and other types of visual amenities are rare in the Downtown shopping center. A few boxed trees appear along Maiden Lane and on Grant Avenue near Market, and sporadically, other firms put out trees and flowers at certain times which serve as a reminder of how pleasant it would be to have some kind of permanent planting in the Downtown shopping center.



Planting . . . an effective advertisement

The importance of planting in commercial centers is often overlooked or even denied because it may interfere with maximum advertising, but what is also overlooked is that an environment that is, over-all, a pleasant one, is a more effective advertisement than any amount of individual touting.



Union Square . . . The major exception

The Hotel and Entertainment Center

In contrast to the financial and shopping centers, the hotel and entertainment center in San Francisco is a somewhat sprawling area, intermittent rather than compact, with a wide range rather than a selective mixture of uses. Indeed, it is rather difficult to call the downtown entertainment center the entertainment center, considering the great pull of such areas as Nob Hill, Chinatown, and North Beach where the facilities are as well or better developed for different varieties of entertainment. The choice of area depends in great measure on the type of entertainment being sought, the amount of money to be spent, and the special likes and dislikes of those seeking entertainment. Most entertainment requirements can be met within the area bounded by Van Ness Avenue, Market Street, and The Embarcadero, and this all-inclusive area properly might be considered the San Francisco downtown entertainment center.

There are at least three different and separate divisions within the downtown core area hotel and entertainment center: the Geary - Powell center, the Market Street center, and what is popularly called the "Tenderloin" which straggles over a number of streets including Mason, Turk and Eddy.

The Geary-Powell hotel and entertainment center is initiated on the north by the Sir Francis Drake Hotel at Sutter and Powell Streets at the base of Nob Hill. It extends to include the St. Francis Hotel on Union Square, and west to the two legitimate theaters on Geary Street, the Geary and the Curran; the Stage Door moving picture theater on Mason Street; and the Clift and Bellevue Hotel group at Taylor Street. From Geary to Market along Powell Street there is an almost uninterrupted series of entertainment facilities, restaurants, bars, hotels and even a small moving picture theater.

Market Street on both sides from Powell Street west to the Civic Center is the principal moving-picture theater area. This area has also a heavy concentration of retail facilities, counter restaurants and bars, some of the latter offering live entertainment. Mason Street, Eddy Street, and Turk Street are the Major entertainment streets in the "Tenderloin", an area crowded with bars, small night clubs, a great variety of eating establishments and a clutch of small hotels.



Vulgarity and not much vitality

The different segments of this hotel and entertainment area appeal to widely different clienteles. In the Geary-Powell area there are opportunities for serious eating, bars make their appeal by way of sophisticated decor, and the large hotels are prestigious establishments of international repute. The Mason-Turk-Eddy area is devoted, in large part, to entertaining the single person and military personnel, both

large groups in San Francisco. The appeal is not on the basis of prestige, but, rather on that of having a "good time." The atmosphere is boisterous or raucous, and rather too commercialized on the whole to be genuinely friendly. On the other hand, there is little attempt at the pretentious, and the small bars are apt to have a "neighborhood" quality, serving as meeting places for local residents, mainly hotel and small-apartment dwellers.



No hint of glamour

It is rather pointless to speak about clutter in entertainment centers -- Broadway is not expected to look like Bond Street -- but if Broadway is the model, Market Street has all of its vulgarity and triviality and not very much of its vitality. Some of the more heavily retail blocks, particularly between Fifth and Sixth Streets on the south side of Market, have had a reduction in the number of overhanging signs in recent years, allowing better visibility to the moving picture marquees and thereby reducing the amount of clutter. Market Street as a whole, however, presents a tawdry appearance west of Powell Street.

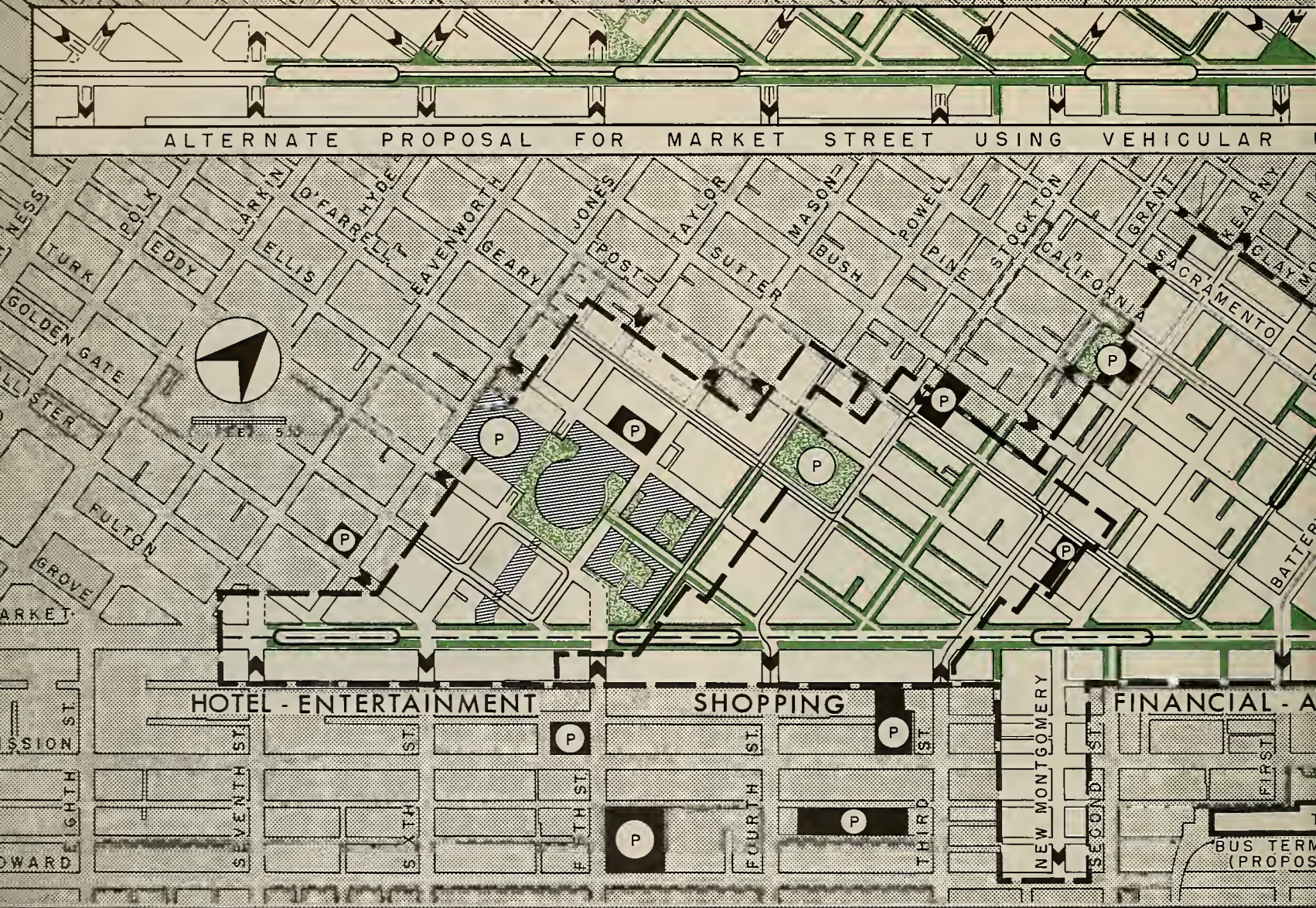
Streets such as Mason, Turk and Ellis are tawdry almost to the point of vocation. A certain amount of deliberate tawdriness is perhaps proper in an area devoted to the purveyance of popular entertainment. However, if one condones the banal and unimaginative simply because this ostensibly is what is being bargained for, nothing will ever be done to improve the appearance of the area. What is lacking is any hint of imagination or any touch of glamour. Without some such element the result is inevitably bleak, and bleakness in an entertainment area is unpardonable. Part of this bleakness is a result of the number of open-lot auto-parking facilities in the area.



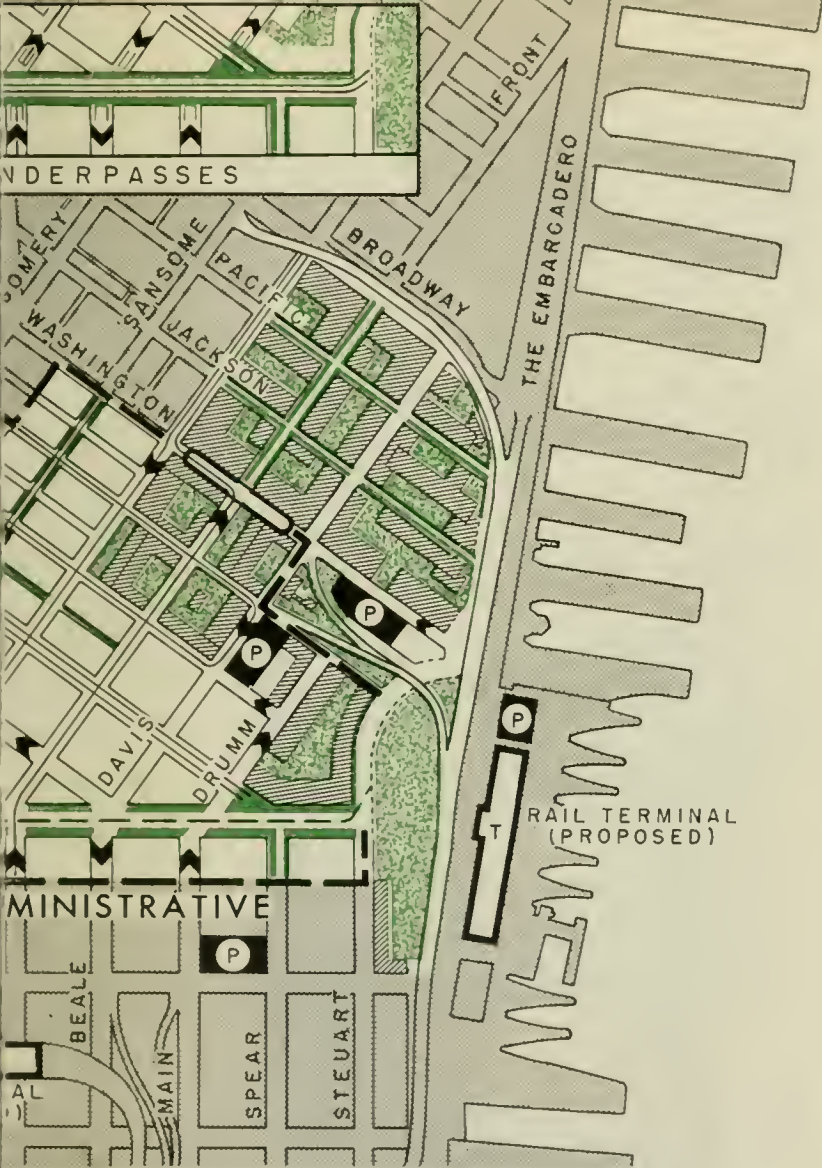
Bleakness is unpardonable

In general, much of this area, particularly in the vicinity of Mason and Turk Streets, has the appearance of a bombed-out sector with the buildings, undistinguished at best, exposing unflattering views of back walls and faded signs brought to light after forty years by the recent demolition.

The provision of parking space in this automobile age is, of course, an unquestionable



A SUGGESTED PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN



LEGEND

- — — FUNCTIONAL AREA BOUNDARIES
- — — ONE-WAY STREET
- (P) MAJOR PARKING FACILITY
- == PEDESTRIAN STREET
- ▨ PEDESTRIAN OPEN SPACE
- — — TRANSIT LINES
- - - MARKET STREET TRANSIT
- RAPID TRANSIT STATION
- ▭ (T) TERMINAL FACILITY
- ▨ SUGGESTED NEW DEVELOPMENT

necessity, but the manner in which such provision has been made may be questioned. The piecemeal tearing apart of a section of a city in order to provide parking lots will make the space available but there is something drastically wrong if in doing this, there is havoc wreaked on the area that this parking is intended to serve.



Unflattering views of back walls

One of the defects of the entertainment area is that it is too sprawling and uncohesive. With a more intelligent selection of parking sites and a much better treatment of them, the different parts of the area could then be better defined and given at least some of the qualities of visual appeal that one should expect of an attractive entertainment area.

Downtown Contrasted With Stonestown

In comparing a relatively small planned shopping center such as Stonestown with the San Francisco downtown area, certain points of contrast become obvious. Stonestown lives primar-

ily because of the parking it provides and secondarily because of the facilities it offers. Downtown on the other hand, lives primarily because of the facilities it offers and its central location in respect to established traffic and transit routes. It lives as well because of the existence of certain other uses and services close to it.

Stonestown was planned as a unit and is a single design. Downtown was built up piecemeal and is the result of numerous unrelated designs. Stonestown is primarily a retail center. Downtown is a financial, administrative, retail, hotel and entertainment center.

From the standpoint of design, Stonestown in all but one case separates the major flows of pedestrian traffic and the automobile traffic. In the downtown area automobile and pedestrian traffic are in competition at every corner crossing.

Parking at Stonestown surrounds the shopping area, separating it from the adjacent residential development. The downtown area surrounds its more limited parking which, in certain areas, interrupts the business frontages.



A uniform framework

Individual store fronts in Stonestown vary greatly in architectural style or treatment of facade, but the buildings provide a uniform framework within which these variations occur. Downtown the different store fronts and other facilities are greatly varied in treatment and the buildings themselves are of varying heights and sizes, producing in many cases a gap-toothed appearance along some streets.

Store-front advertising in Stonestown is kept to a minimum and signs are usually related to the buildings in scale and style. Store-front advertising Downtown runs the gamut from well designed and restrained examples to the extreme in gawdy and garish identification.



Street furniture . . . designed to harmonize

Most of the street furniture in Stonestown -- signs, light standards, benches, etc. -- has been designed to harmonize with the total effect of the center. In Downtown San Francisco there has been no co-ordination of different kinds of street furniture with the result that there is a great deal of confusion and clutter.

100 Planting is an essential element of the Stonestown shopping center concept, both in the parking areas and in the pedestrian mall. Downtown has no consistent planting or landscaping features, except for Union Square and the Mechanics' Monument Island.

142 The development of planned regional shopping centers has served to emphasize the very important role that over-all appearance plays in attracting customers and investors to an area. Downtown areas are in an extremely disadvantageous position where general appearance is concerned. Not only is a great host of private interests involved but also several branches and agencies of government. However, to compete effectively with new and attractive developments planned, built, and maintained as a unit, a process of re-education and re-evaluation applied to the appearance of downtown areas needs to be set in motion. Over-all appearance needs the same serious consideration heretofore given to the problems of circulation, parking and transit, for these simply help provide better access to what must be made a more attractive locality.

111. THE PROSPECT FOR DOWNTOWN

San Francisco wants a downtown area that works well and looks well, is conveniently arranged and easy to get to. But to achieve this it must be understood that there is not simply one interest to be served -- either the automobile, the retail interest, the financial and administrative interest, or the hotel interest -- but that all must be served in some way.

This means -- and the point must be underlined -- that a balance of interests must be sought in which everyone gives a little to gain a little. The downtown area cannot have, for instance, an infinite amount of parking, a compact area, a good mass transit system, functionally important peripheral uses kept in the present close relationship, a minimum use of land for non-taxable purposes, infinite flexibility of movement, equal accessibility to all properties, off-street loading and unloading, and no great investment in functional improvements by private interests all at the same time. The very best designed of the regional shopping centers do not have all these things and, in fact, completely rule out such important elements as mass transit, a great variety of uses, and complete accessibility by automobile to all businesses.

It must also be recognized that if the automobile is the only element in its transportation system that the city is willing to spend money to accommodate, it will never come close to solving the downtown problem, but will succeed only in creating new and greater problems. In attempting to find even partial solutions to the problems of fitting the city to the automobile, a great deal of the freedom and flexibility in the use of downtown streets must be sacrificed. This too must be understood, since this sacrifice often results in a great deal of inconvenience to certain businesses that, because of traffic rerouting, must alter their manner of doing business or sometimes even move. However, simply to sacrifice freedom in order to gain greater ease in circulation is

not enough. There will be no point in doing this unless a gain can also be made in certain other directions as well: towards providing more space and more pleasant space for the pedestrian and towards reducing the amount of conflict between the automobile and surface transit, to the advantage of the latter, if possible.

None of these things can be accomplished unless the principles and the goals of transportation planning are understood. No one is going to be willing to sacrifice freedom of movement, the use of the streets, a particular access, or taxable land unless the necessity for any or all of these things is quite apparent, and unless the end to which these proposals are being applied is equally apparent. The difficulty of making these things understood is considerably heightened by the fact that it is not the city which is so much at fault, as everyone imagines, but that the automobile is not well designed for the use to which too many people are trying to put it.

There is a fairly narrow choice of possible courses of action that are applicable to the downtown area and all of the improvements that are suggested in this report are necessary in the sense that they are not alternatives. Freeways are not an alternative to mass transportation; a functional street arrangement is not an alternative to the improved appearance of streets. Rather, all are elements in a course of action and each element depends on the others for effectiveness.

In the main, there are six phases of the problem in which a course of action needs to be prescribed, decided upon, and acted upon:

- ✓ 1) The provision of a regional rapid transit system integrated with the local system.
- ✓ 2) The completion of the freeway distribution system.

- ✓ 3) The provision of parking facilities at proper locations.
- ✓ 4) The systemization of the downtown streets to provide for pedestrian, surface transit, and vehicular movement that, to as great a degree as possible, is not conflicting.
- ✓ 5) The improvement of the over-all appearance of the downtown area to create an attractive environment.
- ✓ 6) The provision of new facilities, as needed, for the continuing development of the area.

1. Regional Rapid Transit

In a large metropolitan area a rapid transit system is the best means of providing transportation for the greatest number of people in the most efficient manner. The difficulty which has arisen with a more and more dispersed population pattern is that any kind of transit system suffers from an economic point of view when development is spread at very low densities over a very wide area. This kind of suburban development grew with the automobile and depends upon the automobile as the major means of communication. Although there is a large and growing population in sprawling suburban areas, there is not a very large population at any one place. There is, however, a very large number of automobiles that converge at certain times during the day upon major centers of employment, Downtown San Francisco among them.

A basic requirement of rapid transit is that it should be rapid -- if possible more rapid than the transport provided by the private automobile. It should deposit its patrons as close as possible to their destinations -- which is more easily done at the employment, shopping or entertainment center than on the return trip to the point of origin. It should,

if possible, be inexpensive to the user if it is to compete with the automobile. It should be comfortable, but since the comfort of driving one's own car is considerably reduced by the difficulties and tensions induced by driving on the public streets and highways, there is considerable leeway as to the amount of "comfort" it is necessary to offer. This is particularly true if the trip can be made a short one in time. Standing, while always more or less objectionable, becomes less so if there are few stops and starts and no long periods of being stalled enroute. Some standing is probably inevitable at peak hours if a maximum use of equipment, from an economic standpoint, is to be made.

A modern rapid transit network, if developed in the Bay Area, would run between the more densely concentrated centers of population, with a convergence, by feeder bus or automobile, at points along the outer ends of the system. Delivery and pick-up at the downtown end would suffer, as the present trans-bay and Peninsula service has suffered, from a one-stop terminal arrangement. The system therefore must offer a series of delivery and pick-up points in the downtown area between the financial center and the Civic Center.

The type of rapid transit to be offered, whether above ground, below ground or on the surface, will depend in great measure on the terrain and its development at different points along the route. In the downtown area the very fact that a rapid transit system cannot share its right-of-way with other vehicles and still be rapid dictates something either above or below the surface. Strong objections to overhead systems which have not been completely answered, such as noise and unsightliness, presently tend to favor selection of an underground system.

The Freeway Distribution System

It is a matter of conjecture as to how far a rapid transit system will go in relieving the

street and highway system of what has become an intolerable burden of automobiles. Even with an optimum transit system and optimum transit patronage the number of automobiles using the highways and freeways for one reason or another will continue to be high, and probably will be close to capacity. If no rapid transit system is developed these highways and freeways will be subject to chronic congestion.

The freeways now being designed and built in San Francisco were originally conceived as only one element in a total transportation program that must include the equally important element of mass transportation. Unless this is understood, the fact that the freeway system itself does not "solve" the circulation problem leads to a great deal of frustration and general unhappiness among citizens who wonder why all this money is spent if not to "solve" the problem. Freeway construction alone is an invitation to further "hardening" of the traffic arteries at the time when the condition is already in an advanced stage in some of the narrower surface streets.

The purpose of the freeway distribution system is to take the still high volume of private vehicular traffic coming downtown via freeway and deposit it at a series of points of entry close to the key destinations in the downtown area. It is also intended to guide traffic without a destination in the downtown area around the area rather than through it. If this system is successful, it will mean that the bulk of private vehicular traffic in downtown streets will have a specific destination within the area to which it may be guided by a system of one-way streets. These streets will more or less prescribe the route a vehicle may best take once it has left the freeway at some particular point of ingress.

The freeway plan in San Francisco, as designed in the Trafficways Plan of the official Master Plan and as it is now being constructed, makes a rather wide loop around the downtown

area, enclosing not only the downtown business areas but the residential areas immediately west and north, and part of the industrial area to the south of the business center.

The freeway system will considerably facilitate point-to-point automobile trips within the city and from out of the city into the downtown area and out again, but increasing traffic on the ordinary streets and thoroughfares, particularly within the downtown area, will require even more drastic regulations than now prevail if it is to move at all.

3. The Provision of Parking Facilities

Unlike the planned shopping center, Downtown cannot hope to offer a parking space for every possible customer with an automobile. This amount of parking space cannot be provided without inducing a crippling congestion on the streets and without excessive demolition of shopping and entertainment facilities. Inevitably the downtown area must depend on the development of a good public transit system if it is to survive and the parking that is provided should be made available on the basis of an integrated downtown planning program.

The size and location of parking facilities to serve the downtown area must be related to the over-all organization of the street pattern and of the functional areas. Parking facilities that cannot be reached and cannot be emptied because of a one-way street pattern or a conflicting transit pattern are not going to produce much good. In general, parking facilities should not be located in the center of core areas. They should not be of a size to create an access problem in the streets serving them. They should be distributed to serve different areas, not lumped into a single location.

Open-lot parking should in general be discouraged in the downtown area because it interrupts business frontages, creating a dead spot which tends to spread along the street it

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occupies, and because in most cases it is damaging to the appearance of any street in which it is located. Although the extent of open-lot parking in downtown San Francisco nowhere approaches the great leveling operation that has occurred in some cities it is disheartening to San Franciscans to see the distinctive urban quality of some parts of their downtown area being destroyed because of this negative development. It may be suggested that it is chiefly because of the complete absence of any attempt to give parking lots an attractive appearance that they do so much to destroy the compact urban character of downtown San Francisco. A little macadam, a wire fence and a string of lights have little visual interest in and of themselves. On the other hand, even a parking lot could contribute something to the appearance of the downtown area if some attempt were made to provide the barest kind of amenity, a tree or a little planting, or a structural wall. An instance of a more imaginative handling of the parking lot problem is provided by the San Francisco Housing Authority in the lot adjoining its administration building at 440 Turk Street.

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Open-lot parking should be considered either a permanent facility, in which case some of the above mentioned design possibilities should be brought into play, or it should be ruled out altogether so that the proper investment, either garage facilities or some other permanent use of the land, will not be postponed indefinitely.

Huge peripheral parking areas served by transit -- the fringe parking proposal -- can only work in a compact city like San Francisco, in locations close to its boundaries and entrances. The trip downtown from any point within the city by automobile is a relatively short one. Transferring from a private automobile to transit at the very end of the relatively short journey involved is not appealing and could only be made successful if parking in the downtown area were prohibited altogether and outlying parking were free. However, traf-

fic approaching the city from the suburban areas, particularly from Marin County and the Peninsula might be induced to transfer onto either the rapid transit system or express bus routes using the freeways for the remainder of the journey if the parking fee covered the cost of transit or vice versa. Whether this would be feasible economically or physically deserves further investigation.

4. The Systemization of Downtown Streets

The normal city street performs other functions than that of simply carrying private automobiles to and fro. It is integral to the transit system and it provides for the pedestrian. The bulk of the automobile has required that more and more space be devoted to it exclusively at the cost of giving up space for the pedestrian and in some cases to the decided disadvantage of the transit system.

These different uses of the street, particularly in congested areas, are often in conflict. There are conflicts between turning automobiles and pedestrians crossing at each intersection. There are conflicts between buses entering and leaving the stream of traffic to pick up passengers and automobiles which fill up the lanes required for this kind of movement. Finally there is the problem of gaining the maximum room for vehicles on the street without reducing the pedestrian area to a narrow catwalk.

The question should be raised as to how many activities the normal city street can accommodate without serving all of them inadequately. The freeway, for instance, is essentially a very wide street serving one purpose and one purpose only: that of providing for the movement of automobiles and trucks. In the center of the city, in contrast, narrow streets are burdened with all major forms of movement -- transit, private automobiles and trucks, and pedestrians. What is proposed here is a complete re-organization of downtown streets for these different primary functions: to carry

private vehicles, to carry transit, and to carry pedestrians.

Obviously, no existing street can be made available to one and only one functional purpose in the way that this can be done on a grade-separated freeway. Vehicular streets will need sidewalks for pedestrians, and transit and pedestrian streets will need space for delivery of goods. But if the major downtown streets can be classified under this system, then each element in the downtown traffic group will at least be given some attention and will be subject to individual consideration.

How can one remove certain streets from use by the private automobile when there is apparently not enough room for it now, using every available street? The only answer is that devoting every spare inch to the automobile has not resulted in any permanent gain but rather has merely aggravated the functional problems of the downtown area as a whole. If transit is going to work at all it has to be made as important as the private vehicle. Ideally, it should be the more important of the two. Further, the planned shopping center has given an adequate demonstration that pedestrian circulation cannot be relegated to what is left over as it is at present in the downtown area, but must be given as careful consideration as public transit and the movement of private vehicles.

This is where the sacrifices, spoken of before, come into the question. The downtown retail merchant or the hotel owner who believes that when the amount of space available to the automobile is limited his business suffers, should realize that unless such limitations are brought about, voluntarily or otherwise-- unless the movement of traffic is properly controlled -- he may lose his business altogether. The reason for this is clear. To make the downtown area a paradise for motorists would mean over-throwing the premise of the downtown core; that it is a collector of a great number of people. If all of the people who now come to the area came by private vehicle, even suppos-

ing that such vehicles were used to capacity, which is rarely the case, there would not be roads large enough to bring them in nor space to put the vehicles. In other words, if private vehicles were the only method of reaching downtown there would be fewer people coming downtown because of the physical limitations involved.

On the other hand, the number of people who could be brought into the downtown area by means of public transit is almost limitless. To provide for this "unlimited" number, however, would require the use of more of the open area for pedestrian use than is now the case. This could and should be done.

5. The Improvement of Over-all Appearance

If people are sometimes said to be indifferent to their environment, it is more apt to be true that they have been brutalized into indifference by their environment. If people are to be made aware of their environment, something in that environment must awaken the remote stirrings of aesthetic judgment and appreciation.

The praise now being given regional shopping centers is in greatest measure a reaction from the really sordid and depressing aspects of downtown areas. But this is nothing more or less than an aesthetic awakening on the part of certain business interests which is bound to influence the tastes of a wider and wider group of customers.

Market Street is no longer an attractive commercial street, if, indeed, it ever was. Rather it is a dowdy and ugly street for much of its length and one that seems increasingly so to many people who use it, not so much because it is becoming older and seedier, but because more of those who use it are becoming aware of its very real shortcomings.

Some of the problems of Downtown so far as its appearance is concerned, are not subject to



Rather dowdy and ugly

any easy solution. The hodgepodge of buildings, big and small, that lines the street is not going to be improved overnight. But there are ways of making a hodgepodge of buildings more unified in appearance without any structural changes at all. It is not even necessary, and would probably be quite wrong, to paint every thing the same color. What is required is that enough people in a given area or along a certain street decide to work out something that would be more satisfactory and that would mean a great deal more, in total effect, than any minor, or even major, individual effort. This would be so mainly because there would be created something consistent, interesting, and visually satisfying rather than something on a relatively small scale, competitive, disharmonious, and intermittent.

The treatment of the store fronts in the Plaza Hotel is a very good case in point. One's eye is attracted to this line of shops not because any one of them is particularly startling but because something consistent and rather well designed has been attempted; the things that should be uniform are uniform -- sign sizes, awnings, materials and background color; the things that should be varied are varied -- principally lettering styles.

In certain cases the simple absence of the things that are particularly annoying -- over-

hanging signs, mis-matched awnings, and garish banners -- will produce a startling effect which depends, however, on the general clutter elsewhere.

If more space could be devoted to the pedestrian, more space could be devoted to the sort of things that make the shopper's experience a pleasant one, such as planting, places to sit, and changes in pavement texture.

The increased use of the automobile has resulted in a gradual accumulation of paraphernalia along the streets, particularly at corners. Now there is a question as to whether it or any part of it serves the purpose intended. What is needed is a serious design study to indicate how all the necessary information can be conveyed simply, effectively, and visibly without further adding to the present accretion of confusing bric-a-brac on practically every corner.



An accumulation of paraphernalia

Another element adversely affecting the appearance of downtown streets could be remedied by improving the method of vending newspapers. The festoon of newspaper racks, and vendors' shacks now occupying practically every corner in the downtown area is an abuse of public property. One example of a step at least in the right direction is provided at the corner of Kearny and California Streets. Here it was the

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firm occupying a new building at this corner which apparently stuck at the thought of what would happen under the normal procedure and which therefore provided a small kiosk in harmony with its own structure. Kiosks that could either be attended or self-service, but unified in design, would simplify the problem of buying a newspaper to a tremendous degree. The flimsy racks with which one must wrestle and which, besides being unsightly, are exceptionally inefficient, should be banished as a civic nuisance.



The festoon of racks and shacks

6. The Provision of New Facilities

In relation to the economy of the Bay Area and of the state, San Francisco is in the awkward position of having to run with all its might in order to stand still. A slackening of the pace always means that this comparatively small area falls backwards in relation to its neighbors.

Thus, there should be recognized the importance of new, permanent investments and improvements in the city. New businesses to maintain the health of its industrial and central areas, new institutional and residential developments to replace the old and outworn -- these increments will determine, over a period of years, the status of this city as an employment cen-

ter, as a tourist and convention center, as a financial capital, and as a decent place in which to live.

In terms of Downtown not every function and not every area has the same potential for growth, although all may improve. If additional space is to be provided in the downtown area for new facilities, encouragement should be given primarily to those types of uses which are regionally significant, rather than to functions that are in a competitive position with similar facilities elsewhere in the region. This may appear to be a paradox on the surface: that the burden of expense, for instance, which has been assumed necessary to sustain the retail center should be shifted to make more convenient and attractive those facilities in the fields of finance and administration, insurance and entertainment that seem most stable or least threatened. But it is essential to note that it is precisely these functions that sustain the downtown center and sustain its retail function as well, rather than the other way around.

It may be that the retail shopping center has attained its maximum economic growth; at any rate one would not anticipate any startling new increment or investment in this area. On the other hand, both the administrative-financial area and the hotel-entertainment area are capable of great strides ahead. The downtown entertainment area, indeed, has not even come close to its potential in terms of development. The need for new convention and display facilities for one thing, and the need for at least one more and probably more than one more first-rate hotel are actually very pressing needs.

In certain areas existing buildings and uses are now outmoded, among them the wholesale produce market. Here, unless new facilities replace the existing ones, it is probable that the businesses will slowly die out due to the inefficiency of the present archaic arrangement. If a new wholesale produce market were to be built on a new site outside the downtown area, there

is a question as to the use of the present facilities on the land these occupy. A gradual growth in the financial area may be anticipated, particularly if rapid transit is improved as the major regional carrier. It is very likely that some of the present produce market space may provide room for office space. It might be feasible also to introduce some residential uses into part of the area, to take advantage of its proximity to the employment center, the dramatic bay view, and the particularly favorable climate in this protected area. In addition some of the businesses in the area may be expected to remain and expand, and with replanning, new types of businesses may be accommodated. These would include printing firms, some wholesale firms, maritime businesses and industries, and import-export firms.

Another area that is very much in need of replanning to improve existing business properties and to provide new space for expanding businesses and new industries is located immediately south of the central district, the "South-of-Market" area. Here narrow alleys and the blighted residential properties along them create problems of access for the light industries located in the area. Some of these industries would welcome the opportunity to acquire land around their sites if such were made available through the redevelopment process. Providing such land for expansion would mean that the exodus of these industries, damaging to the local economy, could be halted. At the same time some of the loading and delivery problems created by the obsolete alleyways could be solved by widening and clearing for off-street loading spaces.

The importance of such new investments should not be under-rated. It is the key to the continued health of the downtown area. But these improvements hinge on the provision of some of the aforementioned public improvements, particularly upon the solution to the transit problem.

IV. A SUGGESTED PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

The objectives of the suggested plan for downtown San Francisco are threefold: 1) To provide a circulatory system that brings into balance mass transit, private automobile, and pedestrian systems, avoiding so far as possible conflicts between these various street uses; 2) To provide for the expansion and improvement of the functional areas of Downtown by indicating possible locations for new development and for redevelopment, including locations for new parking facilities; and 3) To recommend areas where the appearance of streets may be improved by the treatment of buildings, signs, pavements and street furniture.

In all of the problems facing Downtown a number of alternatives present themselves when any particular solution is under discussion. The plan presented here is not intended to rule out any of these various possible solutions within the framework of a general approach to downtown problems. Rather, each alternative should be subject to consideration so that a final program of action will be developed from an intelligent selection of alternatives.

Circulation

Foremost in consideration is the provision of a mass rapid transit system linking the downtown area of San Francisco with other communities in the Bay Area as well as with the outer communities of the city proper. Studies being conducted at the present time for the Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission, and studies to be undertaken by the City of San Francisco, should indicate which among the alternative types of transit and alternate transit routes will be most appropriate from an economic as well as a functional point of view.

In the plan presented here a route is shown that presumes a subway under Market Street with several stations for suburban riders, rather than a single-stop terminal at the edge of

Downtown. An underwater tube from the East Bay is shown entering Downtown to the north of the Ferry Building running under Washington and Sansome Streets to serve the financial center, and out Market Street through the shopping and entertainment centers to a terminal at the Civic Center. A line from the Peninsula is indicated joining the system at Seventh Street, running east over the same route on Market Street and looping back in the financial center. Similarly, an extended Market Street line, serving the western part of the city, with branches through the Sunset and Twin Peaks Tunnels and the Bernal Cut, would join the line near the Civic Center, also turning back in the financial center. The system indicated would be entirely underground in the Downtown area, with mezzanine stations, which could serve also as pedestrian underpasses.

Through operation -- East Bay to Peninsula, for example -- is entirely possible with this arrangement. However a method for turning back in the downtown area is highly desirable to obtain maximum flexibility of routes and in the use of equipment. Ideally, such a rapid transit system should provide stations at central points in the different centers of the downtown area, such as Union Square in the shopping center. An underground route parallel to but north of Market Street would most nearly meet this ideal, but may be found to be prohibitively expensive compared with a Market Street route. A simpler measure -- diverting the Market Street route via Geary and Powell -- would help to locate stations at the centers of destination areas, and is recommended for consideration.

San Francisco has had innumerable studies made and reports issued, some officially sponsored and others as private promotional endeavors, pertaining to the best method of providing for its transit needs. Among all these reports there is unanimity on the need for grade separated facilities that offer rapid

service. Needed now is a final evaluation of the alternatives and the acceptance of one for an action program. With the completion of the Bay Area rapid transit study by the Rapid Transit Commission, all the parts of the puzzle can be fitted together into an integrated solution within San Francisco proper. The time for decision is rapidly approaching.

The freeway distribution system, (see map 1) which is an adopted part of the Master Plan and is presently under construction in part, comprises the Central Freeway, the Bayshore-Bay Bridge Freeway, the Embarcadero Freeway, and the Broadway Tunnel. Ideally it should circle the downtown area in much closer proximity than is indicated. However, the extremely difficult topography and high land values of the downtown area and the location of the Bay Bridge to the south have tended to widen the circle in these directions.

The east-west distance between the two arms of the encircling freeway is determined by the rather elongated character of the whole downtown area which in itself is determined by the hilly topography to the north and the difficult sub-soil conditions in the South-of-Market area.

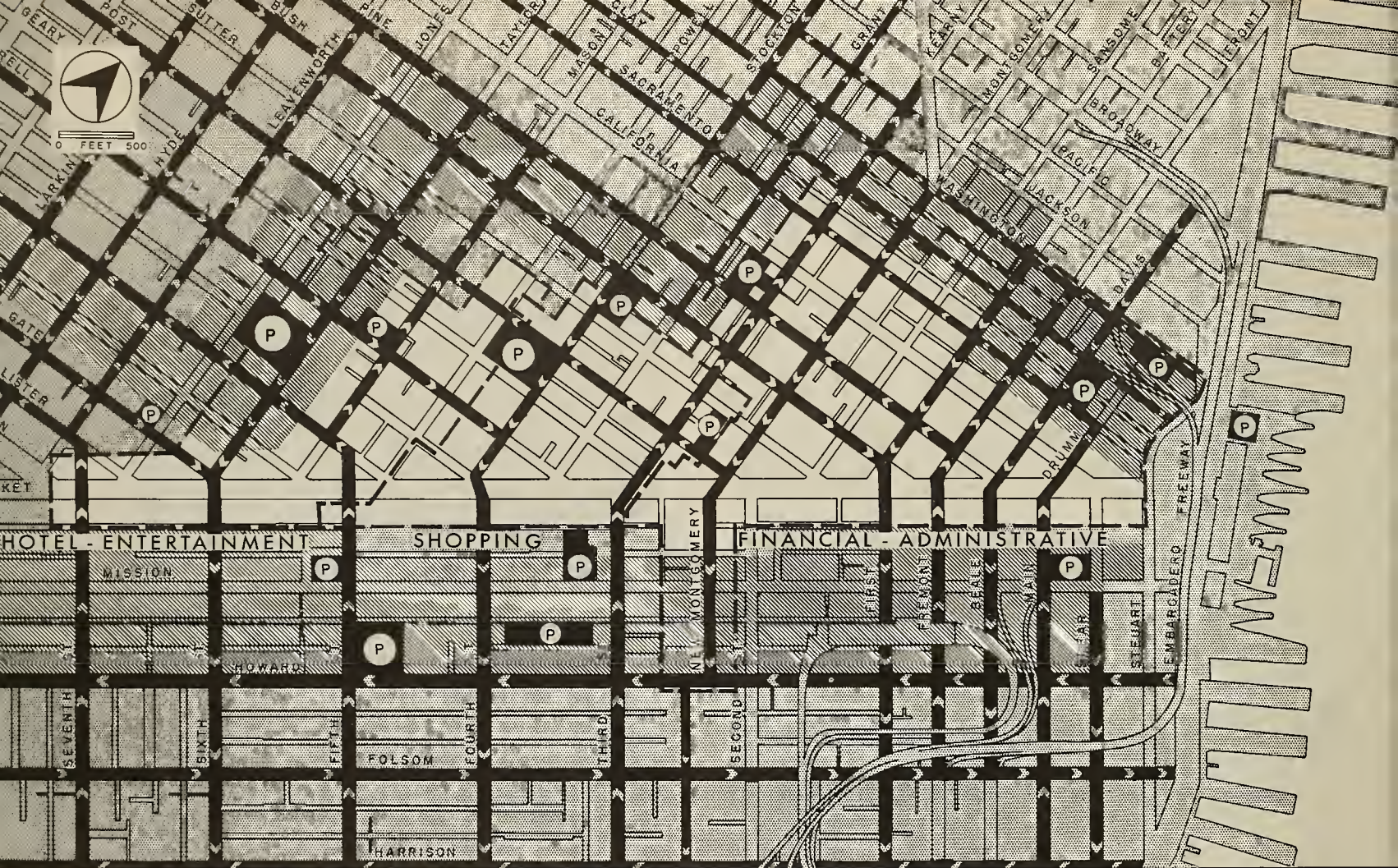
Direct access and egress to and from the downtown area and the freeway distribution system, when completed, will be provided at Main and Beale Streets, Fremont and First Streets, Fourth Street, Seventh and Eighth Streets, and Ninth and Tenth Streets on the south; Washington and Clay Streets on the east; and on the west at Golden Gate Avenue and Turk Street, Post and O'Farrell Streets, and Eush and Pine Streets.

It is proposed that surface streets in the downtown area be divided into three major classifications: vehicular streets, primarily for use by private automobiles; transit streets, primarily for use by surface public transit; and pedestrian streets, primarily for use by persons on foot.

The vehicular street system shown on the plan is one of many possible variations. In essence it is a one-way street system related to the on-and-off ramps of the freeway distribution system, and is an extension of the one-way street system now in effect. (See Map 4). Vehicular streets in this plan are intended to give access to a series of off-street parking facilities located for the most part in what might be called a parking belt. Vehicular streets also provide means of egress from the downtown area to either access ramps of the freeway system or to the surrounding living and working areas.

Although the regional transit system, including the Sunset, Twin Peaks and Mission routes, is completely grade separated along Market Street, there will still be major conflict on the surface between traffic on Market Street and traffic crossing Market Street. Two principal alternatives exist. One is to provide a public transit level either above or below the surface for the intra-city bus routes serving Downtown and for the routes providing local service within the Downtown area. A subway for trolley buses, built concurrently with the subway for rail rapid transit would fulfill this alternative. Or, local transit could remain on the surface of Market Street, and cross-traffic could be carried in underpasses. This alternative is shown on Map 3.

Underpasses, keyed to the one-way street system, would provide a free and continuing flow of traffic from one side of Market Street to the other which would not be in conflict with either pedestrian or transit flow on the surface. The feasibility of each underpass would have to be determined by detailed engineering studies. Objections heretofore raised against automobile underpasses across Market Street have been based on an assumed two-way traffic system. The one-way system suggested here could be more easily and more economically accommodated. A stage program of financing and construction could be carried out over several years.



DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO: ONE WAY STREETS AND PARKING

➤ ONE-WAY STREET
 P MAJOR PARKING FACILITY

— — — FUNCTIONAL AREA BOUNDARIES
 Hatched Pattern PARKING BELT

PLATE 4

At three locations in the plan, Steuart, Fifth, and Seventh Streets, South-of-Market streets are shown extended across Market to facilitate circulation at these intersections. The Seventh Street extension is presently in the work program of the Department of Public Works. (See Capital Improvement Program, 1954-55). The other two suggested are similar in function as means of tying South-of-Market streets into the North-of-Market system.

Public transit streets in the suggested plan for the downtown area fall into several different categories: In the first category are two-way transit streets such as Sutter and Geary, on which surface transit is given priority over other types of circulation. As principal transit streets they would serve as downtown collector routes for several lines serving outlying areas. In the second category are one-way transit and automobile streets such as Stockton and Kearny Streets. Ideally less desirable than the first, they are necessary where steep topography, narrow widths, or an insufficient number of streets preclude the establishment of separate automobile and transit streets. In the third category are transit and pedestrian streets. On these, automobiles could be almost totally excluded, and the sidewalks widened for the benefit of pedestrians. Streets suggested for this category include Sansome, parts of Powell and Geary, and possibly Market Street if vehicular underpasses are built and buses are retained on the surface.

Suggested pedestrian streets would include portions of Ellis Street and Grant Avenue, where only a one-way lane and a parking lane would be available to delivery trucks and taxi service. In those cases where vehicular rights-of-way could not be significantly narrowed to provide for wider sidewalks, (for instance on transit streets such as Geary and Sansome Streets) the treatment of the street, through planting and through the use of benches and other street furniture and amenities would help to emphasize the dedication of the street primarily to the

pedestrian. In addition, some sort of informal, perhaps open-vehicle, shuttle service might be provided along the pedestrian streets, similar to the "elephant trains" used at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in 1939. Moving sidewalks, while not indicated in the plan, would be appropriate on pedestrian streets between major parking locations and activity centers, for example along Ellis between Mason and Market Streets.

Narrow streets and alleys are also designated as pedestrian areas in the plan. Some of these alleys will always be needed for truck delivery purposes, but, in many cases, the appearance of such alleys and streets could be improved in the manner of Maiden Lane and delivery times could be arranged so that their use by pedestrians during peak periods would not be hampered.

While the street system proposed in this plan seems to work to the disadvantage of the private automobile, this is largely because this type of traffic has, until now, been given every advantage to the distinct disadvantage of public transit and pedestrian traffic. Thus, the private automobile is the one element that will inevitably have its freedom of movement encroached upon in order to gain a little leeway for the other forms of movement. At the same time, the freeway system is a major public investment that is being made now, and one that works mainly to the advantage of private vehicular traffic. For this reason it is felt that a greater equity will be achieved when the other forms of traffic movement are given the same amount of attention as the private vehicle has received to date. Arthur Caylor, writing from Milan in the San Francisco News on October 28, 1954, describes the virtues of the main shopping district there as "a glass-covered intersection of two shop-filled streets. No autos. No scooters. A pedestrians' paradise. You can sit at a sidewalk cafe . . . and watch. You see people by the thousands milling around, meeting friends, filling the stores. It suddenly becomes obvious

that the (persons) are right who say the way to save Downtown is to turn it over to the pedestrians. . . . Where the pedestrians don't have to jump, business booms."



With the development of a rapid transit system the present Bay Bridge transit terminal may no longer be needed for its original purpose. Since the building at First and Mission Streets is still relatively new (it is not yet twenty years old) and as it is closely tied in with the bridge approaches, it would seem feasible to adapt the structure for use as a union terminal building for inter-city bus operations. Buses from the east could have direct ramp connections to the building from the lower deck of the Bay Bridge without ever touching the surface streets. It might also serve as an airport bus terminal if a new facility for this type of service is not built.

The Southern Pacific Terminal at Third and Townsend Streets would no longer serve as a dumping place for commuter passengers in the event of a transit system of the type suggested in the studies now being made for the Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission. A rearrangement of the Coast Division passenger train facilities at this location might serve to untangle the traffic problems at Fourth and Townsend Streets where waiting trains impede the flow of traffic for long periods of time. Special study must be given this problem.

It is recommended that the Ferry Building be modernized and that terminal facilities be improved to accommodate all transcontinental railroad passengers. Coupled with a rejuvenation of the Oakland Mole and new ferry boats, the Ferry Building could be a railroad terminal without an equal in any U. S. city. Consideration might also be given to bringing the Los Angeles trains from Third and Townsend along The Embarcadero tracks to the Ferry Building. This would be possible without blocking other traffic if an elevated plaza were developed in front of the Ferry Building, and the surface roadway of The Embarcadero diverted via Steuart Street and its North-of-Market extension. In addition, development of the World Trade Center and a small park, will help to rehabilitate the entire area at the foot of Market Street.

Expansion and Improvement

North of Market Street two major improvement areas are designated in the suggested plan, one in the hotel and entertainment center, and the other in the area of the present wholesale produce district.

It is proposed that a convention center be built in the North-of-Market area. This proposal is based on several important considerations. A convention center in theory and in use is a facility intended primarily for persons coming to the city from distant points by rail, air or ship. Such persons are lodged for the most part in the concentration of downtown

hotels. A convention center should ideally be located as an integral part of the hotel and entertainment center of the city. It should be easily accessible on foot or by taxi from the major hotels in the Downtown center.

The location proposed for the convention center, occupying parts of four blocks bounded by Mason, O'Farrell, Jones and Turk Streets, is an area presently in need of rejuvenation. It includes the least attractive parts of the present entertainment center and a large number of open-lot uses. The location of an important facility at this point would have a direct and beneficial effect on the surrounding hotel and entertainment area and on the nearby shopping center.

The suggested area, in contrast to any area south of Market Street, is not a major employment center. It includes no industries, but rather a mixture of uses that are economically and physically in the beginning stages of decay. A new facility at this point would not compete with existing facilities but rather would bolster and supplement them. In contrast, a South-of-Market location, as has been suggested, would tend to create a new and competing center which itself might suffer in competition with the established centers and which would do these no particular good. Parking could be provided in the proposed convention center which would serve both the center and the surrounding core area.

The area at the foot of Market Street and to the north in the wholesale produce area could accommodate a wide variety of new uses. Closest to Market Street and The Embarcadero, an import-export trade center and a superior development for light industries and maritime industries could be provided that would compete effectively with the same type of development in Santa Clara and at Menlo Park. In connection with these, parking facilities could be provided, directly connected with the on-and-off Washington-Clay ramps of the projected Embarcadero Freeway.

To the west, the area could provide room for the inevitable extension of the administrative and financial center, using high standards of development, similar and superior to the recent Gateway Center development in Pittsburgh.

Closer to Broadway there would be accommodated a center for architectural, engineering and design firms using existing buildings in some cases, and a residential development that would take advantage of the convenient location, good weather and view opportunities of the site by providing apartment accommodations for small families and business and professional people working in or near the area.

Other areas where new facilities may be anticipated or where improvements are recommended include Kearny Street between Sutter and Clay, a logical extension of the financial center, Market Street west of Powell, and the area east of the proposed convention center, between O'Farrell and Market Streets, to include new and improved entertainment facilities, hotels and shopping facilities, the latter particularly on Stockton Street between Ellis and O'Farrell. The area south of O'Farrell extending west to Van Ness Avenue largely outside the downtown core, contains many substantial business and residential uses but should be studied for rehabilitation and a general improvement in appearance. Properties along Market Street, particularly west of Powell Street, may have a startling rejuvenation upon completion of a rapid transit system.

The removal of some retail properties along Market Street, particularly in the Civic Center area as suggested in the report, An Introductory Plan for the Civic Center made by the Department of City Planning in 1952 would have the salutary affect of concentrating business properties along Market Street so that marginal retail uses would not be encouraged. A loss of taxable land might be compensated for by the improvements resulting from greater competition for the remaining property, particularly if a rapid transit system is provided.

A pedestrian connection between Market Street and the suggested convention center is shown in the plan. This might take the form of a pedestrian arcade or gallery (similar to those to be found in many European cities) where entertainment facilities, show-bars, restaurants, shooting galleries and other carnival types of businesses could be concentrated -- rather than being strung out along Market Street to the Civic Center.

Improved Appearance

Overhanging signs and other forms of store front advertising, particularly in the shopping center, might best be controlled by voluntary agreement among the firms along an affected street. The most satisfactory results will be obtained if an architect or an advertising-design specialist is engaged to create an imaginative and interesting treatment of a series of store fronts. A sign-control ordinance may be necessary, however, to assure complete adherence to a sign control plan.



Pedestrian streets should be provided with consistent and appropriate planting and well designed street furniture such as benches, comfort stations, and rapid transit stations. Pavement treatment, where possible, should be varied and attractive. The pavement treatment in front of the Clift Hotel provides an example of an existing improvement of this nature; it is a dark gray terrazzo marked off in squares made by thin metal bands.

Traffic control apparatus, traffic signs and street lighting fixtures should be carefully designed, located and combined to avoid confusion and the present cluttered appearance as well as to facilitate the movement of traffic. As our technology advances it is to be hoped that the overhead wires and supporting poles for trolley-bus operation may be minimized. All equipment placed on city streets -- trash baskets, mail boxes, fire hydrants, police and fire call boxes and alarm systems, newspaper racks and stands -- should be considered part of a total design and not plunked down without consideration of their effect on the character of an area. This entire problem should be reviewed by the city departments concerned.

Where new development is contemplated such as in the convention area and in the wholesale produce market area, an application of the shopping center ideal is possible. The principal departure in such areas might be the creation of exclusive space for the shopper or visitor on foot. Such space may be created in the form of courts, malls, arcades, passages, terraces and bridges separating buildings so that each side of each structure is an available frontage for selling or whatever use is most appropriate. In this way the total building frontage can greatly exceed that provided for in the present arrangement of a single frontage for most buildings. At the same time frontages can be more compactly arranged rather than being extended down long street corridors beyond the endurance of the average walker. A local prece-

dent for this type of arrangement may be found in Stonestown.

Treatment of the pedestrian level would vary for different types of activity; large open areas where one may anticipate the greatest pedestrian movement -- near large office buildings, theaters, hotels -- large and small courts with a more parklike character for browsing, strolling, outdoor eating or even simply resting; passages, either open or arcade to provide contrast and a change of pace and to set-off and separate large open spaces. The differences in character between the squares should be expressed by different types of paving, planting and ornamentation; the use of water and trees, the incorporation of sculpture and painting in the design of squares and buildings, and the use of banners, flags and advertising. The new Northland Shopping Center created by the J. C. Hudson Company in Detroit, considered by some to be the best designed of the recently built shopping centers, has pioneered in the incorporation of art work and planting to create a variety of distinct atmospheres within the confines of a single center.

Conclusion

30 The suggestions contained in this report and plan represent an attempt to balance a group of related programs as they apply to the San Francisco Downtown business center. This balance implies that no element in the group is given unusual emphasis, that some elements are given greater emphasis than heretofore and that other elements in the program are less emphasized. The physical appearance of the area is put on a parity with parking; the pedestrian is put on a parity with the automobile and public transit. However, it is to be anticipated that those most interested in some particular phase of the whole downtown problem will find insufficient emphasis given to that particular aspect of the problem or will find the suggestions in this plan inadequate in the light of what they feel to be the emphatic difficulty, be it parking, transit, or traffic congestion.

30 It must be emphasized, however, that this report and the plan it contains is not meant to "solve" any particular aspect of the existing problem. It is intended, rather, to suggest a future role for the downtown area and the need for a program of development for this regional center. "Solutions" to problems, other than mathematical, are at very best temporary and, at worst, tend to create new problems. Those interested in "solving", once and for all, the problems of downtown will be disappointed in this report. Those interested in the growth and development of downtown will, it is hoped, be stimulated to formulate new ideas and to act towards their accomplishment.

